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Report on the field visit to Niger by members of the Executive Board of UNICEF, 30 March-6 April 2008

I. Introduction

A. Objectives of the visit

1. Members of the UNICEF Executive Board from Australia, Cameroon, Colombia, Croatia, Malaysia and the United Kingdom visited Niger from 29 March to 4 April 2008. The main purposes of the visit were, first, to observe the field operations of UNICEF and the work of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) in order to understand the relationship of the Niger-UNICEF country programme of cooperation to national development priorities, the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and bilateral development assistance. This is especially relevant given that the draft country programme document for Niger is to be considered at the annual session of the Executive Board in June 2008. The second purpose of the visit was to gain insights into the implementation of the policies and strategies of UNICEF at the field level and to have an opportunity to discuss the impact of the results of UNICEF-assisted programmes with the Government and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) at the national, regional and community levels.

2. The visit was an opportunity for the Executive Board delegation to obtain a first-hand view of the operations of UNICEF in a low-income country facing complex challenges. It also gave the delegation an insight into an environment where low capacities and poverty constitute two of the main obstacles to the full realization of children's rights.

* E/ICEF/2008/9.

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B. Structure of the visit

3. The visit comprised two parts: (a) activities held in and around Niamey, which consisted mainly of meetings and briefings along with several field visits to the outlying areas of the capital; and (b) activities held in the region of Maradi, which included calls on dignitaries and field visits.

4. The programme included meetings with senior officials of the Government, including H.E. Mr. Mamadou Tandja, the President of the Republic of Niger, Ministers, other senior officials; traditional chiefs and community leaders; representatives from the United Nations organizations; NGOs; and representatives of bilateral cooperation partners.

5. The members of the Executive Board delegation would like to thank the UNICEF country office, overseen by the Representative, Mr. Akhil Iyer, for the excellent arrangements made. The delegation would like equally to thank all those with whom they met, most particularly H.E. President Mamadou Tandja, for sharing their time and valuable insights into the situation of children in Niger.

II. Background — Niger

A. Political and social context

6. The Republic of Niger covers an area of 1.267 million square kilometres, two thirds of which are desert. With a population of 13 million, 46 per cent of which is under 15 years old, Niger is ranked 174 out of 177 countries in the Human Development Index. The fertility rate of 7.1 per cent is one of the highest in the world. Despite progress in reducing child mortality, almost one in five children dies before reaching age five. Both acute and chronic malnutrition rates remain high, despite notable reductions in both following the major nutrition crisis the country experienced in 2005. The high rates are attributable to poor access to health care, inadequate dietary intake and weak feeding and care practices.

7. Sixty-three per cent of the population lives below the poverty line. Economic growth has averaged 3.9 per cent over the 2002-2006 period. The Government has recently prepared a new Accelerated Strategy for Development and Reduction of Poverty (SDRP) covering the period 2008-2012. The harmonization of the national legal framework with the Convention on the Rights of the Child is well advanced, although budget allocations in favour of children and women, recommended by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, is not well implemented.

8. The country is prone to emergencies, including drought, nutritional crises, disease outbreaks such as cholera and meningitis, and recurrent flooding. The impact of these emergencies is exacerbated by the low level of preparedness of families, communities and public services. An internal conflict that broke out in 2007 in the northern part of the country was tied to concerns about revenues from the exploitation of the country's natural resources as well as to inter-ethnic tensions. The conflict has led to a situation of increased insecurity and limited population displacement as well as socio-economic stagnation in this region. The conflict also led to the withdrawal of all United Nations agencies there, except UNICEF.

However, the work in the region has been restricted, with worrying consequences for the well-being of children.

9. The Government should be given much credit for making significant and commendable efforts to improve the situation of children in Niger. However, very high population growth, a low marriage age for girls, and the failure to take full opportunity of schooling, even when schooling is available, constitute major obstacles to the improvement of children's overall well-being. Furthermore, weak capacities, including inadequate availability of quality data and analysis on children's and women's rights, are constraints to the planning of national development programmes.

10. That said, the decentralization policy, implemented since 2005 with the establishment of 265 municipalities, offers an opportunity for strengthening the performance of basic social services. Success, however, will depend on the strengthening of the capacity of local authorities and technical staff in planning, monitoring and evaluation, as well as on community participation.

11. With the exception of the reduction of the under-five mortality rate, (Millennium Development Goal 4), Niger is not on track to achieve the Millennium Development Goals despite macroeconomic and social sector progress. Global acute malnutrition was reduced from 15 per cent in 2005 to its present level of 11 per cent, and chronic malnutrition decreased from 50.1 per cent in 2005 to 36.5 per cent in 2007. However, there are worrying indications of the ability of Niger to manage a repeat of the 2005 food crisis. While a full evaluation has yet to be made, there are concerns that in view of a poor harvesting season, increasing food prices and the sale of food to adjacent markets, 2008 will be a challenging year. By the same token, there is a concern that children will suffer first and suffer most should a food crisis occur.

12. Malaria, acute respiratory infections and diarrhoea are the most important direct causes of mortality among children under five. A main determinant is the low performance of health services in terms of access, utilization and quality. Another determinant is the marginal improvement in family practices and behaviours at the household level for child survival and development, although the percentage of children sleeping under mosquito nets increased from 17 to 55 per cent. The rate of exclusive breastfeeding remains at only 13.5 per cent. The rate of access to safe drinking water is 41.4 per cent, with access only at some 30 per cent in rural areas. Access to adequate sanitation is only 8.1 percent nationally.

13. The maternal mortality ratio, which has shown no significant improvement, is among the highest in the world, at 643 per 100,000 live births. Rates of access to prenatal and post-natal care are only 46 and 33 per cent, respectively. Only 33 per cent of deliveries are assisted by trained staff.

14. The HIV/AIDS prevalence rate among adults, at 0.7 per cent, is one of the lowest in the region. However, only 16 per cent of young men and 13 per cent of young women aged 15-24 years know about methods to prevent sexually transmitted diseases. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS estimates that in 2006, 46,000 children were orphaned or rendered vulnerable due to AIDS.

15. The net enrolment rate for primary school reached 48 per cent in 2006-2007, compared to 46 per cent in 2005-2006. Improvements in gender equity in education remain weak due to early marriage of girls and cultural and religious constraints.

The parity index in primary school is 0.7. Only 12 per cent of women are literate, compared with 28 per cent of men, and only 1.6 per cent of children aged 3-5 years benefited from pre-school education in 2006.

16. The percentage of children registered at birth dropped from 45 per cent in 2000 to 32 per cent in 2006 due to the low performance of civil registration services and rapid population growth. Child trafficking and violence against women are major concerns. Some 38 per cent of children aged 5-18 years are victims of child labour. The implementation of a legal and operational framework for the protection and care of orphans and vulnerable children, including children in conflict with the law, is limited.

III. UNICEF contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals: main objectives, strategies and contribution

A. Coordination with the Government and other partners, including the United Nations agencies, in the context of United Nations coherence

17. The UNCT members are for the most part relatively new to Niger. The Resident Coordinator and the Representatives of the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) as well as the Deputy Representative of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) all arrived in Niger less than one year ago. In addition, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations will change Representatives in mid-2008. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs established a permanent presence in Niger with a small office following the nutritional crisis in 2005.

18. The major priorities of the UNCT over the last year have been to (a) support the Government along with other partners in the finalization of its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP); (b) support the Government in holding a donors' round table conference in late 2007, which endorsed and reaffirmed donor engagement in the PRSP; and (c) finalize the UNDAF for 2009-2013.

19. United Nations coherence, and specifically strengthening United Nations coordination in general, is an ongoing priority of the UNCT. Priorities for 2008 in terms of United Nations coordination include the formulation of three joint programmes (gender, HIV/AIDS and a multi-sectoral programme in the Maradi region). The roll-out of the Harmonization for Cash Transfers (HACT) is also a major priority for 2008. Joint annual programme reviews (as opposed to agency-specific reviews) will start to be implemented in 2008.

20. The current concerns of the UNCT include (a) increasing food insecurity and a possible aggravation of malnutrition due to a disappointing harvest, rising cereal prices and cereal deficits in neighbouring Nigeria; (b) the ongoing conflict and situation of insecurity in the northern part of the country, with no signs of dialogue/negotiation between parties in sight; (c) a lower-than-desired level of in-house security capacity as it relates to the support/budget received from the United Nations Department of Safety and Security, particularly in relation to security risks prevailing in Niger; and (d) overall implementation of the Paris Declaration (such as

through sector-wide approaches and Common Basket Funds) and the role of the United Nations system/agencies in relation to such approaches.

21. To improve coordination, there is a monthly breakfast meeting involving all development partners. There is also an working group of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee that is co-chaired by the representatives from the World Bank and UNDP. In addition, there are a number of sectoral and thematic working groups, which have a designated lead agency, to facilitate aid coordination. Despite these efforts, more could be done to improve cohesion among the UNICEF Country Team, the UNCT and other development partners.

B. Main achievements and expected results

22. Despite the challenges faced, there are signs of progress and change in Niger. The under-five mortality rate fell from 274 to 198 deaths per 1,000 live births between 2000 and 2006. Measles was dropped from the list of leading causes of childhood mortality in 2005, primarily due to the success of mass vaccination programmes. Hundreds of thousands of malnourished children now receive care through a nationwide network of nutritional rehabilitation centres established during the 2005 nutrition crisis. More than 325,000 children suffering from acute malnutrition were treated through these centres in 2005, and more than 380,000 in 2006. Progress in education includes the fact that one million more children have enrolled in primary school since 2000 and that the gross enrolment rate has increased from 37 per cent in 200 to 54 per cent in 2006.

23. The Niger-UNICEF country programme for 2004-2008 aimed to reduce maternal and under-five mortality, boost children's education, and develop an environment conducive to the protection of children's rights.

24. During that period, the activities of UNICEF contributed directly to the reduction of under-five child mortality. This was accomplished through an investment in high-impact interventions implemented at scale: two measles vaccination campaigns, regular Vitamin A supplementation, increases in the provision of and use of long-lasting insecticide-treated nets to protect against mosquitos, anti-malarial drugs, oral rehydration salts and zinc supplementation, as well as the promotion of exclusive breastfeeding. A large number of government staff received training in technical areas such as the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness and essential obstetric care. UNICEF supported the establishment of services for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV (PMTCT) covering all 42 districts in the country, and resulting in an increase in PMTCT coverage, from 1 to 11 per cent, between 2003 and 2007.

25. The treatment and care of some 900,000 acutely malnourished children since 2005 has been ensured primarily due to the support of UNICEF in partnership with the Government and more than 20 NGOs. The treatment of severe acute malnutrition of children at family level using ready-to-use therapeutic foods has been widely implemented. Severe acute malnutrition decreased from 1.8 per cent in 2005 to 0.8 per cent in 2007.

26. UNICEF also contributed to increasing access to clean water in targeted rural areas through the installation of water systems and water points, which covered the

needs of an estimated 230,000 people. The promotion of home latrine construction and hygiene practices covered 6,750 households and 102 schools. Hygiene and sanitation interventions contributed to the response to recurrent localized cholera epidemics and to the decline in dracunculiasis cases from 174 to 14 over the 2004-2007 period.

27. In education, UNICEF contributed to the elaboration of a national policy on girls' education, which is now funded by several donors. UNICEF also supported the establishment of community-based school management committees in 602 schools in 12 municipalities and ensured the rehabilitation of classrooms for some 16,000 children. School kits were provided for an average of 150,000 pupils per year. In targeted rural areas, girls' net primary enrolment rose to 43 per cent, compared to the national average of 39 per cent. Good results were also obtained for pre-school children. UNICEF supported the development of a national strategy for integrated early childhood development, including community-based pre-school services, and directly supported access to such services for 2,200 children between the ages of 3 and 6.

28. Several key results were obtained in child protection, especially in the legal area. UNICEF support to child protection-related policies contributed to the adoption of a national policy on free birth registration, a national action plan to combat the sexual exploitation of children, and a national juvenile justice programme. UNICEF has supported the preparation of an overall legal code to protect child rights. A law concerning the legal age of marriage was drafted with the support of UNICEF and other partners, although it has yet to be passed. A law was adopted to prohibit female genital cutting, sexual exploitation and harassment, slavery, and child exploitation. Some 1,000 key actors have been trained each year on international human rights conventions, civil status and birth registration, and care and support for orphans and vulnerable children.

29. UNICEF also promoted the sensitization of communities, including traditional and religious leaders, concerning early marriage, violence and discrimination against women, child labour, child trafficking and exploitation. Eleven legal protection committees in eight of the country's nine regions were established, as well as reintegration services for children in conflict with law in all regions. Ten juvenile courts were also established with UNICEF assistance. A major achievement has been the reduction in the FGC rate, from 5 per cent to 2.2 per cent between 1998 and 2006 attributable mainly to intensive work at village level in affected communities.

30. This upstream approach was also taken in the promotion of the rights of children and of the collection and use of data. UNICEF continually advocated and provided support for devoting attention to children's and women's rights and incorporating them into national policies and strategies, including the 2008-2012 Accelerated Strategy for Development and Reduction of Poverty. The collection, analysis and use of data and information on the situation of children and women in the country has been also supported. A Demographic and Health Survey was carried out in 2006 and finalized in 2007 with the support of UNICEF, the United States Agency for International Development and other donors.

31. Equally significant has been the substantial increase in the international and national attention paid to major children's issues in Niger for which more than $70 million in other resources were mobilized in 2004-2008. Child survival and

development issues were included as priorities in the revised National Policy on Communication for Development, and the media has played an important role in promoting them. On average, 45 per cent of the programmes broadcast by the 14 regional media partners of UNICEF are focused on child survival and development issues.

32. The overall goal of the new country programme for 2009-2013, the draft of which will be discussed at the 2008 annual session of the UNICEF Executive Board, is to support the implementation of the Accelerated Strategy for Development and Reduction of Poverty as a part of the UNDAF and within the framework of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminations against Women, and the Millennium Declaration. The country programme aims to make progress towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals concerning child survival, development, protection and participation, focusing particularly on reducing under-five mortality and child malnutrition, on increasing primary school enrolment, particularly for girls, and on preventing abuse, violence, exploitation and neglect of children.

33. The programme will have several main strategies: (a) reinforcing the legal and strategic framework in support of children, and strengthening partnerships with the Government, international partners, civil society and the media to ensure the realization of child rights; (b) continuing the development and scaling-up of high-impact, low-cost interventions for child survival, development, protection and participation, based on such innovative strategic approaches as the Accelerated Child Survival and Development package and the child- and girl-friendly school concept; (c) enabling communities and families to actively participate in the management of basic social services; (d) empowering families with knowledge to implement key family-level practices and behaviours for child survival, development and protection; (e) supporting the provision of essential social services in targeted municipalities; and (f) building capacity to prevent and effectively manage emergency situations affecting children and women.

34. The country programme will be national in scope while supporting high-impact multi-sectoral interventions through all programmes in 12 selected municipalities in Maradi, Zinder, Agadez and Tahoua regions, and in four extremely poor neighbourhoods in the cities of Niamey, Maradi, Zinder and Tahoua. The scaling up of those interventions in additional municipalities will be discussed and planned on an annual basis in coordination with national and international partners, and as part of national sector development plans and the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework.

C. Opportunities, constraints and future outlook

35. There are five main structural constraints facing Niger in its efforts to improve the situation of children, namely (a) budgetary constraints regarding not only resources and the budgetary process but also bottlenecks and the costing of solutions; (b) lack of quality and up-to-date data, even routine data; (c) limited local planning and technical capacities; (d) low access to, and quality of, basic social services; and (e) widespread poverty, which forces families and communities to focus on short-term needs.

36. Adding to these constraints is the fact that budget lines are not oriented towards solving bottlenecks. For this reason, UNICEF has planned to provide support at the policy level, including in the preparation of the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework, as the main strategic approach for the new 2009-2013 country programme.

37. At the same time, there are strong cultural and social factors limiting the involvement of women in the decision-making process and their control of economic resources and assets. Increasing this involvement and control is critical if the rights of children are to be fully realized.

38. Despite these challenges, the Government recognizes the difficulties faced and is making significant efforts in realizing children's rights. These efforts are focusing on areas such as child survival, health, education and nutrition. There is also an attempt to address the adverse cultural and social factors mentioned above. Regarding children's nutrition, while the Government recognizes the critical issues surrounding the issue, the level of awareness varies among the different levels. It is hoped that all levels of Government will soon comprehend the depth of the issue, particularly as the lean season draws closer, bringing with it the imminent threat of a food crisis.

39. The UNICEF Country Team works at both the policy and field levels. In targeted geographical locations, UNICEF leads or supports programmes in a comprehensive and integrated manner to promote community development and address the needs of children and women in the areas of health, nutrition, water and sanitation, education and behavioural change.

40. The comprehensive and integrated programme approach includes direct measures to empower women as means of effecting social change. The use of mass media, including the radio, is important in this regard.

41. Another important means of effecting change has been through traditional chiefs, who hold great sway over their communities and are thus strong advocates for change. The UNICEF Country Team's approach of utilizing their influence is beginning to bear fruit. This partnership with traditional chiefs demonstrates that the Country Team is finding innovative ways of raising sensitive issues in connection with its mandate, such as early marriage and female genital cutting.

42. Despite the awareness and advocacy role played by the traditional chiefs and other community leaders, much more needs to be done to educate the populace about the importance of issues such as reducing population growth, birth registration, children's education, particularly for girls, and exclusive breastfeeding. On these issues, traditional norms and practices are an obstacle. It is clear that much more needs to be done, which in turn requires long-term programmatic interventions. The UNICEF Country Team is demonstrating leadership in these areas.

43. The decentralization process, effectively devolving power to the regions, departments and municipalities, also holds some potential. The communes that the delegation visited displayed a marked degree of involvement and commitment to improving the health and well-being of the community. Moule Safoua, a community that the delegation visited in the Maradi region, had adopted a system in which all community members pay a token for the maintenance of a clean water facility and assign several members to manage it. The investment cost of the facility was borne

entirely by UNICEF. This initiative indicates that communities are willing and able to manage their affairs if given the opportunity and training.

44. Generally, UNICEF and its activities are very well received by all levels of society in Niger. In every place visited, everyone the delegation met held the view that UNICEF should do more. The Government officials, in particular, appreciated the fact that UNICEF had been a steadfast and consistent partner.

45. The main challenge for Niger is the lack of human and institutional capacities at all levels. The private sector as well has weak capacity due to the low levels of development, and is not in a position to assist the Government with systemic support to social policies. In addition to these factors is the vulnerable economy, based on subsistence-level agriculture that is susceptible to the vagaries of the weather. As a result, there is a persistent level of vulnerability, food insecurity and extreme poverty throughout the country. These challenges make it all the more difficult to envisage a successful roll-out or scale-up of the subnational programmes in which UNICEF and the United Nations Country Team are involved.

IV. Conclusions and observations

46. Like many other least developed countries, Niger faces a critical time as the Millennium Development Goals target date of 2015 draws closer. Fortunately, the Government is committed to improving the lives of the children of Niger. As noted above, the Government shows a high level of recognition of the challenges and obstacles facing the country, as well the measures needed to overcome them, but this recognition is not uniformly present at all levels of government.

47. The presence of UNICEF in Niger is of great importance to the country and is welcomed by all levels of society. For this reason, UNICEF is strongly positioned to advocate for behavioural change among the populace, a requisite for overcoming the challenges faced by children and women. Furthermore, it is the view of the delegation that UNICEF, through its involvement in assisting policy formulation, research and data collection, as well as programmatic implementation, plays an important role in assisting the authorities at the national, regional and community levels, particularly at this critical stage of decentralization, which began in 2004.

48. The resource constraints and low levels of capacity experienced by Niger amplify the importance of promoting greater coherence, cooperation and collaboration among the members of the UNCT in Niger. In the discussions with them, the delegation was struck by the fact that they demonstrated differing levels of the sense of urgency to collaborate better, as transmitted by the headquarters of the different United Nations agencies and Bretton Woods institutions present in Niger. In the context of United Nations system-wide coherence, Member States of the United Nations, including members of the Executive Boards, will actively need to take to this into account.

49. The delegation's interaction with the UNCT clearly showed, at the practical level, the importance of discussions regarding the system-wide coherence process, including the "no one size fits all" approach. At the same time, it is also clear that the promotion of greater coherence at the country level requires a clear identification of the strengths and role of all United Nations agencies involved,

including the United Nations Development Programme as the custodian of the resident coordinator system.

50. In order to ensure the maximization of the benefits of the United Nations country presence, it was also observed that important structural issues related to the United Nations operational system need to be addressed in the context of system-wide coherence. Equally important is the need to address the 'human' issues, such as how to ensure that the best person with the right skills is appointed to the right post, especially coordination posts at the senior level. In the delegation's view, this may be facilitated if other agencies in the United Nations development system are more proactive in naming qualified individuals as candidates for the Resident Coordinator post.

51. A lack of resources also magnifies the need for effective coordination among members of the United Nations system, bilateral partners and the Government. In this regard, it was a point of interest that unlike in many other countries, this coordination role is played by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs rather than by a Ministry of Finance, Economic Development or Planning. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper and soon-to-be-signed UNDAF for 2009-2013 should ensure that limited resources are put to maximum effect. But greater coordination between the UNCT and bilateral partners will be required to ensure that the UNDAF is implemented. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen government institutions to ensure effective aid coordination.

52. The low levels of capacity in Niger pose serious challenges. First, it is hoped that decentralization will, by empowering communities and making best use of capacities and resources at the local level, facilitate the scaling up of efforts. However, capacities and resources remain very weak at the communal level. The Government, therefore, needs to carefully balance improving capacities on a mass scale on the one hand, ensuring that minimum standards of quality are met on the other.

53. It is clear to the delegation that the long-term viability of programmatic interventions of UNICEF and the UNCT in Niger depends on, and can be measured by, two interlinked issues: namely sustainability and success in scaling up interventions from the pilot phase to nationwide implementation.

54. Second, low levels of capacity are also related to the nature and length of the involvement of UNICEF in specific programmatic interventions. To illustrate this point, UNICEF is supporting the *Services educatifs, préventifs et judiciaries* (Educative, preventive and judiciary services, SEJUP), which offer educative, preventive and judiciary services for children in conflict with the law and are formally part of a national juvenile justice programme. The issue that needs to be addressed in this particular case is the criteria to be applied to decide at which stage UNICEF should withdraw entirely, leaving it to the Government to fully scale up the project. Withdrawing too early may prevent authorities from being able to continue the project, given other demands on the national budget. In this specific case, UNICEF is advocating that the Government include a separate line on SEJUP in the national budget as a means of ensuring sustainability.

55. It was obvious that a full scaling-up of UNICEF programmes would benefit the children of Niger. For resource reasons, the UNICEF-supported multi-sectoral programmatic interventions are only in a handful of communes. It is therefore

intended that similar programmatic interventions in other communes would be supported by other development partners. In this regard, there is a need to ensure that the same standards are applied.

56. The roll-out of the clusters approach is to take place this year. The UNICEF Country Team will have responsibility for the water sanitation and hygiene; nutrition; education; and emergency telecommunications sectors. While the nutrition sector is well coordinated, effective roll-out of the clusters will require sufficient prioritization and capacity on the part of the country team in the lead areas of UNICEF. While a training workshop had been organized in 2007, the country team had yet to fully prioritize the issue.

57. The impact of some of the issues discussed by the Executive Board was not yet fully apparent at the country level. Due to the already well-developed response in the nutrition sector, the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative had made little impact to date. Regarding the Organizational Review of UNICEF, the country team considered that this was an issue of more relevance for headquarters.

58. The delegation was impressed by the dedication and commitment of the UNICEF staff in Niger; the thoroughness of the practical arrangements, support and assistance provided; as well as the access to the government authorities enjoyed by the UNICEF leadership and staff.

59. The delegation was equally struck and gratified by the hospitality, warmth and openness of the Government and people of Niger.

Annex 1

List of Participants in the field visit by members of the Executive Board of UNICEF to Niger, 30 March-6 April 2008

H.E. Mr. Robert Hill (*Head of Delegation*)
Permanent Representative, Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations

Mr. Francisco Alberto González
Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Colombia to the United Nations

Ms. Jasminka Dinić
Minister Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Croatia to the United Nations

Mr. Raja Nushirwan Zainal Abidin (*Rapporteur*)
Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Malaysia to the United Nations

Mr. Alain Wilfried Biya
Second Secretary, Permanent Mission of Cameroon to the United Nations

Mr. Matthew Cannell
Adviser, Permanent Mission of the United Kingdom to the United Nations

Ms. Kirsi Madi
Secretary of the Executive Board, Office of the Secretary of the Executive Board of UNICEF

Annex 2

Summary of the programme of the field visit

Monday 31 March

1. **Briefing with the UNICEF Country Team**
   - Overview: Country/Donor Environment/UNICEF positioning/UNDAF/PRSP
   - Overview of Niger-UNICEF country programme
   - Progress on Millennium Development Goals/UNICEF MTSP
   - Questions/discussion
2. **Briefing on Child Survival** with UNICEF health, nutrition, water and sanitation and communication staff
3. **Meeting with the UNCT**
4. **Briefing on Protection** with representatives of the Ministry of the Advancement of Women and Child Protection, the Ministry of Justice, the Network of Children's Rights Organizations, and of the Network of Women's Rights Organizations

Tuesday 1 April

1. **Field visit in Niamey: Juvenile Justice Project**
   - The *Services éducatifs, préventifs et judiciaries* (SEJUP) offers educative, preventive and judiciary services for children in conflict with the law.
   - The minor ward at the Niamey prison offers improved detention conditions for children in custody (separation from adults to prevent abuses and violence; recreational activities; skills training)
2. **Meeting with UNICEF Staff Association**
3. **Meeting with Mr. Adam Abdoulaye Dan Maradi**, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
4. **Briefing on Education and Equity** with
   - H.E. Mr. Ousmane Samba Mamadou, Minister of Education
   - Ms. Maiguizo Rakiatou Zada, Secretary General of the Ministry of Education
5. **Meeting with H.E. Mr. Issa Lamine**, Minister of Public Health
6. **Reception** with UNICEF, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries, UNCT, the diplomatic/donor community, the media, and international and national NGOs

Wednesday 2 April (Maradi)

1. **Courtesy visit to the Governor of Maradi**, Mr. Chaïbou Ali Ma'azou
2. **Field visit to Sarkin Yamma Commune**
   - Health Post of **Garin Goulbi**
   - Community-based growth monitoring team of **Garin Gaja** — Advanced strategy for routine immunization

Discussion with the community on essential family practices i.e., exclusive breastfeeding and use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets

3. **Field visit to Saran Maradi and Moule Safoua**
   - Access to water and sanitation
   - Primary school
4. **Meeting** with Prefect of Maradi, Emir of Gobir, Mayor of Sarkin Yamma, UNICEF staff

Thursday 3 April (Maradi)

1. Visit of the **integrated health center** of Sarkin Yamma/Integrated **therapeutic and supplementary feeding center** operated by UNICEF partner Spanish Red Cross
2. Visit of the **therapeutic feeding center** run by UNICEF partner Médecins Sans Frontières-France in Maradi
3. **Courtesy visit to the Emir of Gobir**
4. **Field visit to a village where the Chief and his Good Conduct Brigade** will conduct a sensitization session to combat child marriage and promote essential family practices

Friday 4 April

1. **Meeting with H.E. Ms. Barry Bibata Niandou**, Minister of the Advancement of Women and Child Protection
2. **Meeting with H.E. Ms. Saadé Souley**, Minister of Territorial Administration and Community Development
3. **Meeting with H.E. Mr. Tandja Mamadou**, President of the Republic of Niger
4. **Meeting with donor community and UNCT**
5. **Dinner with H.E.Mr. Ousmane Samba Mamadou**, Minister of Education

Saturday 5 April

1. **Press Conference** (arranged by UNICEF)
2. **Meeting with Nutrition Partners**
3. **Field visit to Makalondi: UNICEF-supported NGO CONIPRAT** — combat against the practice of female genital mutilation/cutting
4. Debriefing and discussion with UNICEF Representative and team

Sunday 6 April

1. **Field visit in the outskirts of Niamey: Child Protection**
   - UNICEF-supported NGO PRAHN — Activities to protect children with disabilities